

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8540
USMISSION GENEVA

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USMTN

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: BEXP, EAIR, JA
SUBJECT: TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE: IMPORTATION OF
HANGLIDERS

REF: (A) 76 STATE 31908, (B) 76 TOKYO 2953

SUMMARY: EMBASSY PREPARING CASE FOR PRESENTATION TO
TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE (TFC) REGARDING HANGLIDERS
WITH OBJECTIVE OF ELIMINATING QUOTA AND LOWERING TAG
FF

ON IMPORTS FROM U.S. WE UNDERSTAND THAT JAPANESE
INTEND TO MAKE OFFER IN MTN NEGOTIATIONS ON THIS SAME
POINT. EMBASSY REQUESTS CLARIFICATION ON CERTAIN POINTS
IN PARA 5 BELOW. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBASSY IS PREPARING TFC CASE FOR PRESENTATION TO
MITI ON QUESTION OF JAPANESE CUSTOMS CLASSIFICATION OF
NON-MOTORIZED HANGLIDERS. QUESTION OF HANGLIDERS HAS
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BEEN UNDER CONSIDERATION BY MITI AND MINISTRY
OF TRANSPORTATION (MOT) FOR OVER TWO YEARS, BUT
NEITHER MINISTRY APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE
DEFINITIVE JUDGMENT ON THIS MATTER.

2. WE WERE APPROACHED RECENTLY BY MR. KOICHI HATANO,
PRESIDENT OF JAPAN HANGLIDERS ASSOCIATION (JHA), WHO

REQUESTED OUR ASSISTANCE IN PERSUADING MITI TO RECLASSIFY HANGLIDERS (NON-MOTORIZED TYPE ONLY) FROM AIRCRAFT TO SOME OTHER CATEGORY. HE STATED HE HAS BEEN TALKING WITH MITI FOR TWO YEARS ABOUT THIS PROBLEM, AND THAT HE HAS ALSO SPOKEN WITH MOT WHICH AGREES THAT HANGLIDER IS NOT AN AIRCRAFT BUT IS UNABLE TO FIT IT INTO ANY EXISTING MOT CATEGORY. MITI HAS STATED NO STRONG OBJECTIONS TO RECLASSIFICATION OF HANGLIDERS, BUT FINDS THEM AN ANOMALY AND IS UNABLE TO MOVE FORWARD JOINTLY WITH MOT.

3. IN REVIEWING REFTELS, WE OBSERVE THAT SITUATION AT MITI DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE CHANGED MUCH OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS. WE BELIEVE IT IS TIME TO RESOLVE THIS QUESTION.

4. MR. HATANO HAS INFORMED US THAT U.S. AND EUROPEAN COUNTRIES DO NOT CLASSIFY NON-MOTORIZED HANGLIDERS AS AIRCRAFT. PRESENT JAPANESE CLASSIFICATION ENTAILS SPECIAL PILOT LICENSES AND AIRPORT REQUIREMENTS, REQUIRES THAT HANGLIDERS ENTER JAPAN UNDER QUOTA, AND MAKES HANGLIDERS SUBJECT TO HIGHER TARIFF THAN WOULD BE THE CASE FOR SAME PRODUCT CLASSIFIED AS SPORTING GOODS. HATANO BELIEVES THERE IS A GOOD MARKET IN JAPAN FOR HANGLIDERS AND THAT MARKET WILL GROW FURTHER IF IMPORT RESTRICTIONS ARE EASED. AMERICAN-MADE HAN-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GLIDERS ARE SAID TO BE FULLY PRICE COMPETITIVE WITH NON-U.S. MODELS.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: BEFORE SUBMITTING FORMAL TFC LETTER, WE WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING HOW HANGLIDERS ARE TREATED UNDER U.S. CUSTOMS REGULATIONS. ALSO, WE WOULD APPRECIATE PRIORITY LISTING, FROM WASHINGTON'S POINT OF VIEW, OF POSSIBLE RECLASSIFICATIONS FOR HANGLIDERS. FOR EXAMPLE, IS LISTING GIVEN IN REFTEL A, PARA 2 STILL VALID?

6. FYI, IN SPEAKING WITH MITI ABOUT THIS MATTER, WE LEARNED THAT JAPANESE INTEND TO INCLUDE HANGLIDERS AS PART OF MNT PACKAGE DISCUSSIONS IN GENEVA. AS WE UNDERSTAND JAPANESE OFFER, IT WILL INCLUDE LOWERING TARIFF RATE AND ALSO ELIMINATING QUOTA ON HANGLIDERS. MANSFIELD

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Message Attributes

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